

The US-Japanese summit: A major step towards war with China

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Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to the US this week marks a major step in Washington's consolidation of alliances throughout the Indo-Pacific and its accelerating preparations for war with China. This is a component part of a globe-spanning war, stretching from the war against Russia in Ukraine to the Middle East with the genocide in Gaza and plans for war with Iran, and reaching all the way to the Pacific.

At a joint press conference Wednesday, US President Joe Biden formally announced a major expansion of the US-Japan Security Treaty for the first time since it was signed in 1960. Biden declared:

Together, our countries are taking significant steps to strengthen defense and security cooperation. We're modernizing command and control structures, and we're increasing the interoperability and planning of our militaries so they can work together in a seamless and effective way.

While the details will be worked out at other meetings behind closed doors, the meaning of Biden's comments is plain. Integrating military forces at the operational level in "a seamless and effective way" signifies that Japan and the US are readying their militaries for war.

Under the US-Japan Security Treaty, Japan already hosts the largest US military contingent of any country in the world. Some 55,000 American personnel are housed in bases throughout Japan. In addition, the US has established key elements of its anti-ballistic missile system in Japan, which, along with those in South Korea and Alaska, would be essential for waging

nuclear war against China.

At the press conference, Biden also announced that the US, Japan and Australia would create a "networked system of air, missile, and defense architecture." The AUKUS allies (Australia, the UK and the US) have announced this week that they will seek to incorporate Japan into Pillar II of the pact, for research and development of hi-tech military systems ranging from artificial intelligence and quantum computing to undersea capabilities and hypersonic weapons.

This military integration is accelerating because Japan is essential to US war plans against China. A recent set of Pentagon war games showed that the only scenarios in which China did not defeat US forces in a conventional war over Taiwan were ones in which US forces had Japanese help.

In their haste to prepare for war with China, Biden and Kishida trample legality underfoot. Their actions blatantly violate Article 9 of Japan's 1947 constitution, which commits Japanese governments to "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." However, Japan is being integrated into AUKUS, an imperialist military alliance whose only purpose is to prepare for war with China.

This will inevitably provoke deep, historically-rooted mass opposition in China and internationally. Twenty million Chinese died in Japan's last war against China, the war of occupation waged from 1937 until the end of World War II in 1945. Japanese war crimes like the 1937 Rape of Nanjing and the 1940 "Kill All, Burn All, Loot All" extermination campaign in northern China are comparable in scope and cruelty only to Nazi war crimes against the Soviet Union.

Like other Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) prime ministers before him, Kishida has made clear his

solidarity with Japanese far-right groups that defend the war crimes against China during World War II. Every year since his election in 2021, Kishida has sent a ritual offering to the infamous Yasukuni Shrine, where 14 “Class A” Japanese war criminals are buried.

The moves by Washington, London and Canberra to integrate Tokyo into the AUKUS alliance amount to an endorsement of the Japanese government’s defense of genocidal violence against China and of the most reactionary political traditions in Japan.

In remarks before a joint session of the US Congress on Thursday, Kishida made clear that the focus of a strengthened US-Japan alliance is not simply regional, but global. “Without US support, how long before the hopes of Ukraine would collapse under the onslaught from Moscow?” he asked. “Without the presence of the United States, how long before the Indo-Pacific would face even harsher realities?”

He added, “The Ukraine of today may be East Asia tomorrow. Japan will continue to stand with Ukraine.”

American imperialism sees the war with Russia, which it provoked, as preparatory to a conflict with China. All of this is taking place as the imperialist powers back Israel to the hilt as it carries out genocide in Gaza. As they plotted war with China, Kishida and Biden sang from the same hymnbook at their joint press conference, denouncing Russian aggression and backing Israel’s “right to self-defense” as it massacres tens of thousands of Palestinians.

All the major imperialist powers are joining in, hoping for a share of the spoils. Like Washington, Tokyo aims to halt its economic decline, having slipped from the world’s second largest economy to the fourth largest over little more than a decade. Last year, it doubled its military spending. And while the Japanese bourgeoisie pledges its fealty to Washington, the interests of US and Japanese imperialism, which fought each other in World War II, are not identical.

As the imperialist powers plot a vast escalation of the global war, class tensions are exploding, with the ruling classes demanding that workers foot the bill for massive military budgets.

The conditions exist for building an international anti-war movement in the working class, based on the perspective of a socialist struggle to abolish capitalism and its outmoded division of the world into rival nation-states. This is the only viable program on which

workers and youth in the United States, Japan, China, Russia and throughout Europe and the world can halt the plunge towards a catastrophic world war.



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